

# **Not my body, I need that! It's got my arms and legs attached!**

Written by dreamkatcha. Any related videos, as always, can be found on my YouTube channel.

None of this would have been possible without the fantastic resources generously provided by immensely talented emulator authors, and communities such as Hall of Light, Lemon Amiga, Lemon 64, World of Spectrum, Moby Games, World of Longplays and Recorded Amiga Games. Thank you for your tireless dedication to preserving the history of gaming.

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If you drove in the back of a car as a kid in 1994 you almost certainly - without a fleck of a shadow of a doubt - owe your very existence to The Incredible Crash Dummies game for the Amiga.

But for the public safety advice of identical twins Slick and Spin (cleverly disguised as ROFLcopter-worthy slapstick) you'd have been catapulted through the windscreen of your parents' car and splattered upside-down against the nearest oak tree. How else would you know that fastening your seat-belt saves lives?



Tyco Toys' original poseable figures featuring double limb ejection mechanisms were based on Vince and Larry, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's official proselytisers.

Nevertheless, as the characters evolved beyond their initial brief they were deemed by several TV networks to be too commercial to sustain their support under the guise of public interest guidance. Their solution was to ban the supposedly PSA interstitials altogether, leading Tyco to cut their ties with the road safety body who had thrust the (world's most famous?) mannequins into the limelight.

You can guarantee I'm going to be trolled by Madame Tussaud's now. :|



Anyway. As 1991 was winding down, Vince and Larry were retired to make way for the far more (hip?) Slick and Spin. Cementing their association with commuter safety edutainment, an accompanying computer-generated 3D cartoon pilot (broadcast on the Fox Kids channel) followed in May 1993. Even if you didn't have access to the station you may have received a VHS copy along with your purchase of the toys.



It was the latter on which the SNES, Mega Drive and Amiga games were based, unsurprisingly adopting the same title, 'The Incredible Crash Dummies'. Right there in the title it says 'incredible', and they're really *not* at all. How ironic, haha etc. etc.

In each case, it's a side-scrolling platformer in which Slick attempts to rescue the dummy double act's inventor, Dr Zub, while Spin babysits the lab for fear of reprisals. In other words, devising a two-player option would have necessitated more resources than Ontario-based developers, Gray Matter, or publisher, Virgin, were prepared to invest.



Mad (though of course *genius*) scientist, Dr Zub, is the only one who understands the technology behind his indestructible Torso 9000 prototype, making him a prime target for kidnapping and tortuous information extraction. Maybe it wasn't such a clever idea to transpose the blueprints into his own brain after all.

Step forward and take a bow deranged dummy dictator.

'Junkman' - forged through the accidental pairing of an evil head with the Torso 9000 - intends to root out the recipe to mass-producing the world domination facilitating gizmos to... well, you get the gist. Even when we're dealing with animated dummies these plots remain consistently predictable - seize power, conquer the world, lord it over the proles. Is there really anything more to life?

Racing against the clock, Slick must negotiate four zones (comprised of four stages), each culminating in a confrontation with one of Junkman's henchthugs, the Junkbots. Plus the main miscreant himself, living it up in his Junk Kastle lair, loyally protected by the boxing-glove-

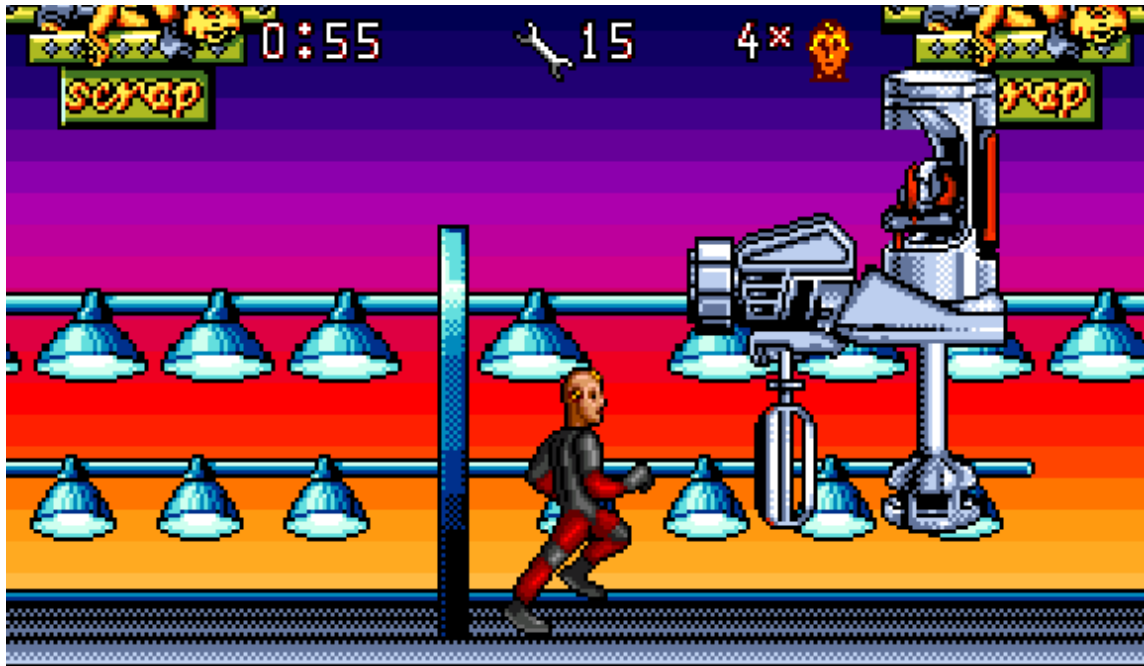
shooting automobile 'Jumbo Junkbot'. According to the *manual* anyway; really he's just the first phase of the final showdown.



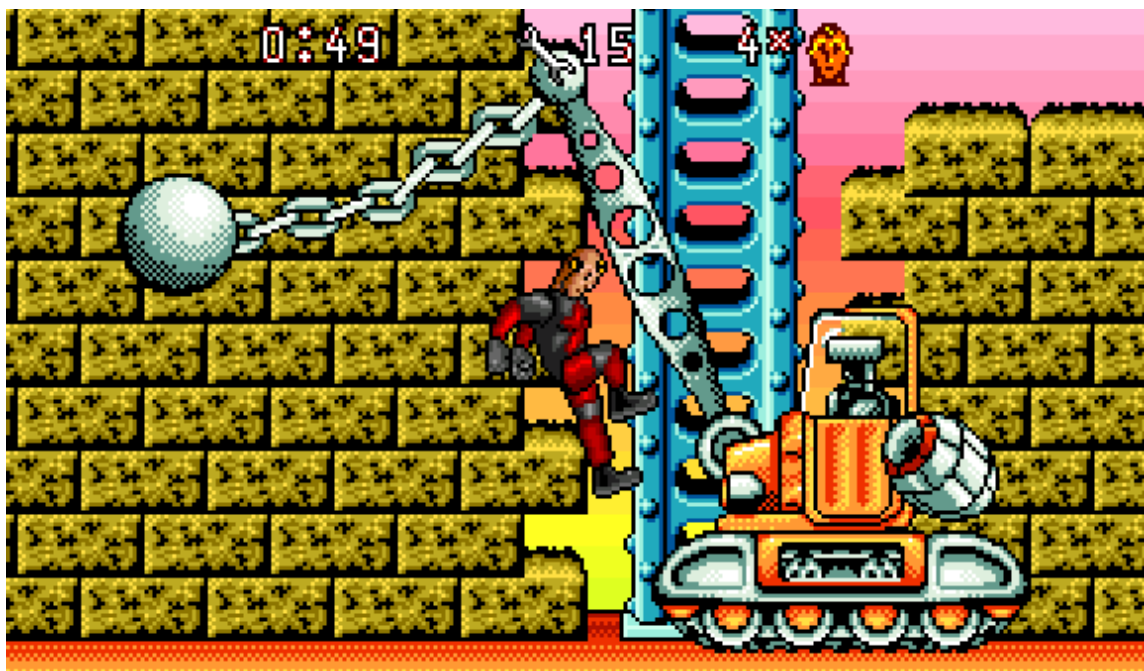
Constructed from junkyard scrap metal, and lifted straight from the cartoon, Junkman's lackeys include...

Not-the-Transformer-of-the-same-name, Sideswipe, riding his 'Whiskmobile' (found lurking in the crash test centre).





A wrecking-ball-swinging crane known as Jack Hammer (who stalks the construction site).

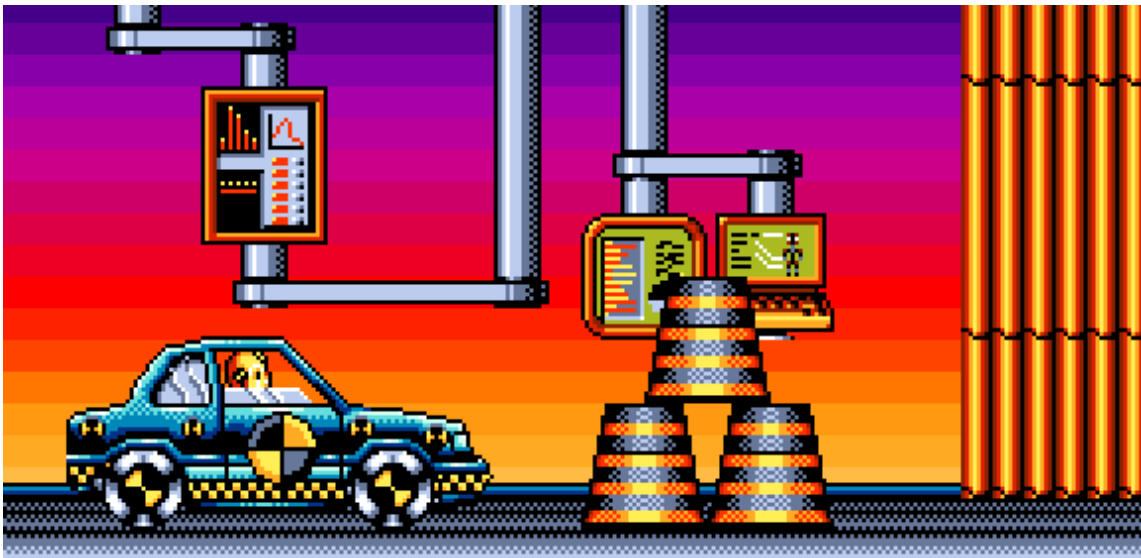


'Hellcat' Pistonhead (ruler of the military testing zone).

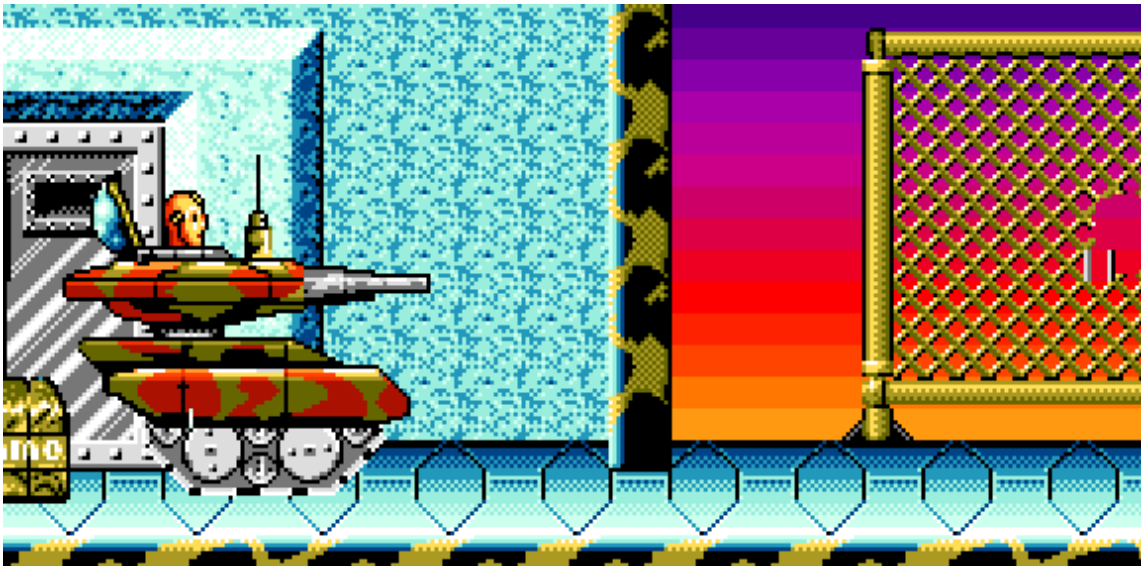
Reminiscent of TMNT's Krang (or do I mean RoboCop II?), the most inventive boss would have to be the mech garnished

with a deviously practical food processor aka Sideswipe. In *my* head at least, it's powered by a liquid-suspended brain.

Upon defeating a boss we are granted the opportunity to enter a bonus stage in which we take the wheel of sundry vehicles including a car...



...bulldozer, or even a tank.



Objective-ly-speaking, the trick is to swerve obstructions throughout the province of an assortment of test courses. We

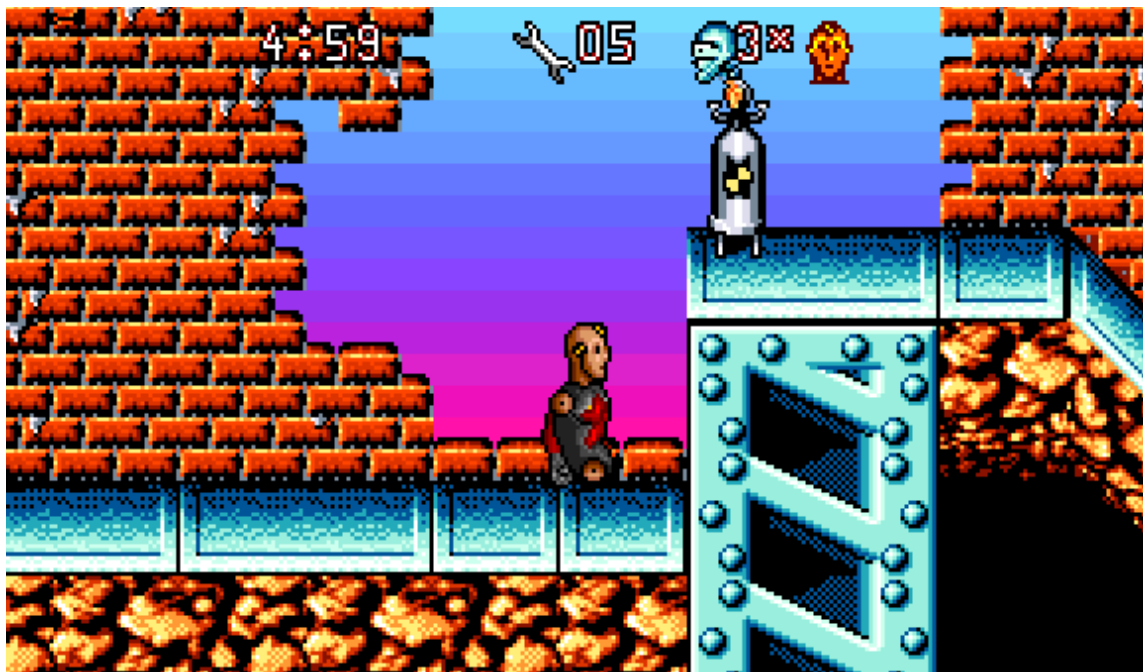


know it's the end of the road - literally - when we crash into a 10 foot tall wall ...at the end of the road.

So far, so mundane. Except each time Slick sustains damage...

...wait for it...

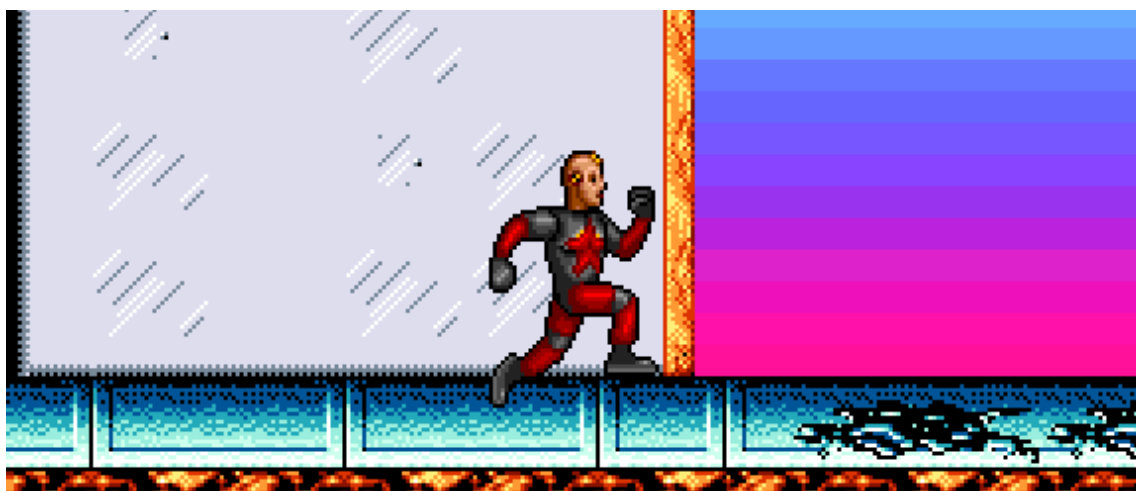
...he loses a limb, one by one until he's nought but a shuffling, jumping jellybean of an abdomen.



Another hit at this stage is enough to send Slick to the knacker's yard...



...unless you can find a screwdriver. With each Phillips collected, an additional limb is restored, transforming us from a bounding quadriplegic to a sprinting, wholesome Olympiad.



Our main defence is spanner-hurling. These travel through the ether via a range of novel flight-path projections as they are summarily upgraded. With limited supplies, however, it's fortuitous that we have the option to fall back on the traditional head bounce to squish adversaries.

Then again, you'd be wise to avoid jumping too much full dot, since Slick comes equipped with a boingy sound effect

that activates each and every time he leaves the ground. Brilliant!

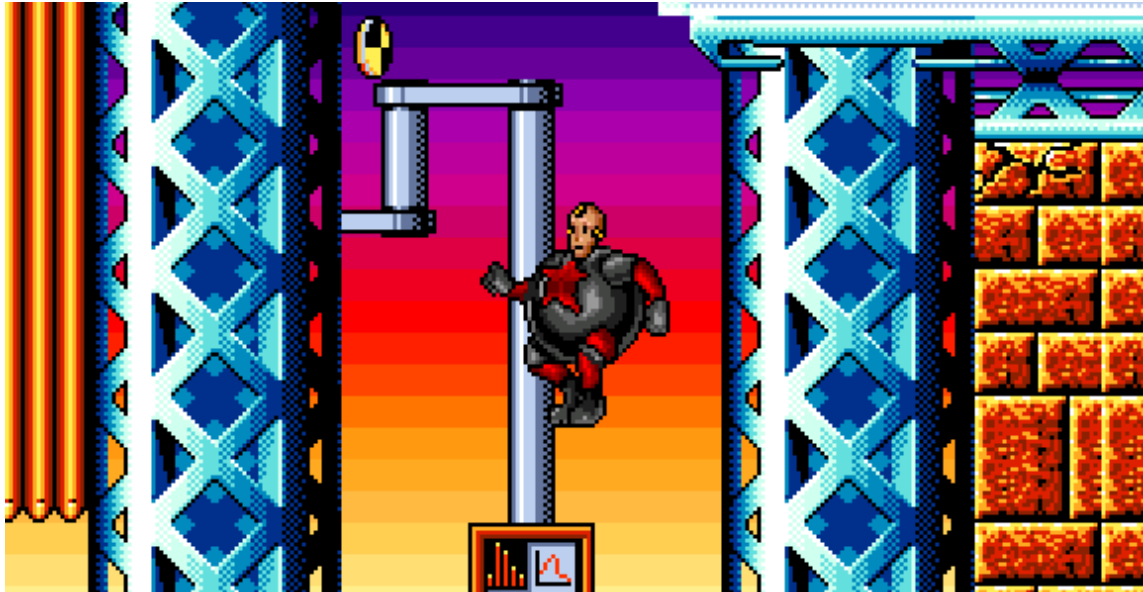
All the sound effects are of an OTT Laurel and Hardy nature actually. They're enough to drive the *deaf* to the mute button! Though that would be a shame since Allister Brimble was also behind the music, and that's *far* better. There are a few chords that evoke the title tune from Overdrive, which makes perfect sense given Allister was responsible for that too.

Doug Townsley's artwork too is wasted on a game of this calibre. It's appropriately cartoony and convincingly animated, while the comic-book cell interludes set the 'humourous' tone to a tee.



When not in decapitated carcass mode - hauling ourselves along the terrain with a single dishevelled arm like an unstoppable pre-programmed Terminator - we can snag 'A'

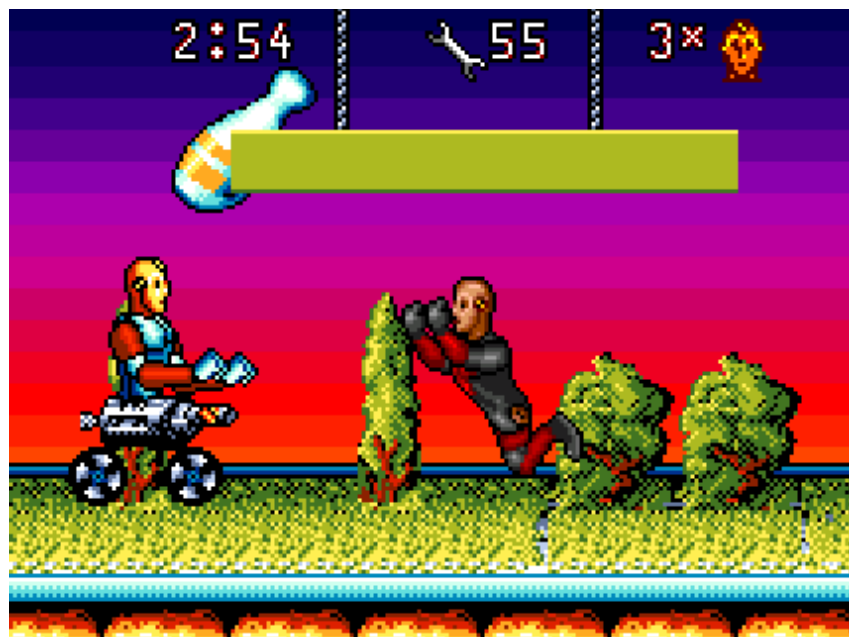
icons to inflate our internal airbag, floating over obstacles out of harm's way. Why car designers ultimately plumped for building these into *steering wheels* is one of life's big mysteries.



Slick is a versatile chap all-round in fact. Who else could lose all four limbs and still perambulate a hazardous assault course totally unhindered? I don't think he even scales back the pace to take account of his capricious disability.



With the "no lawn bowling" notices removed from the SNES/Mega Drive source material, in Amigaland he should be free to give it a whirl.

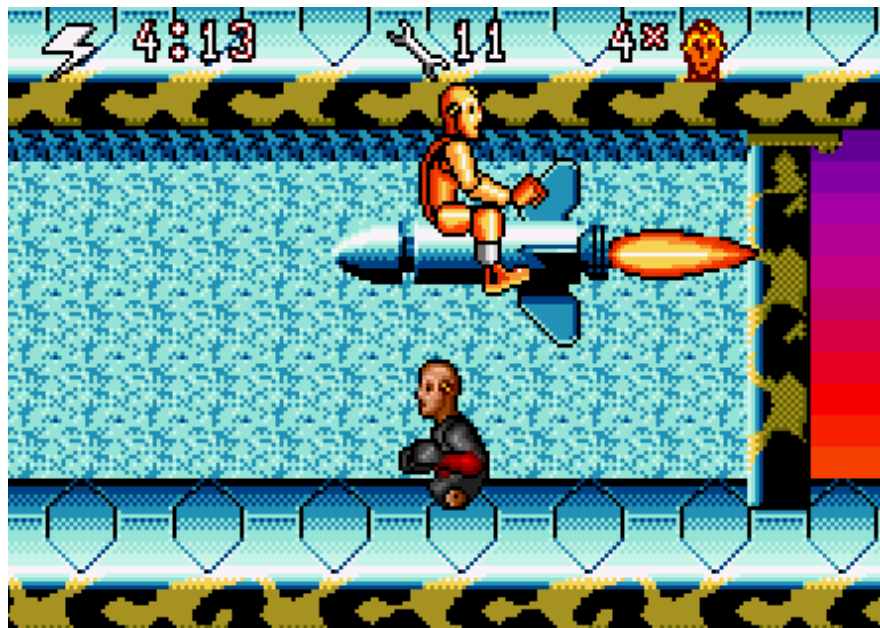


"Missile riding" remains forbidden between versions it should be noted. Not that this deters Junkman's dummy underlings.

Note to self: insert Elton John's Rocket Man here if you video-ise this article.

I'm a rocket maaaa-aaaaaa-aaaaan, burning out his fuse up here alone.

\*Ahem\*



Slick can slide on his backside like Strider. Activate lightning-fast 'overdrives', allowing him to run quicker than Usain Bolt for short bursts. Exploit Sonic-style pinball bumpers to ricochet from wall to wall, consequently reaching platforms ordinarily out of bounds. Duck into a pile of disjointed limbs, seemingly playing dead. Roll down slopes in a compact ball to evade low-hanging threats. And trigger black and yellow launchpads, acrobatically somersaulting to higher ground. With larger varieties serving as level-concluding teleporters.

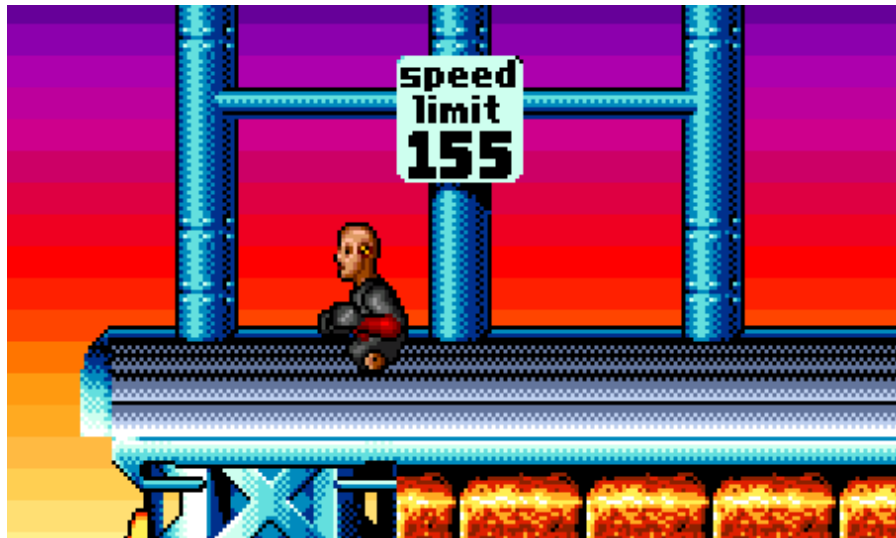




It all sounds super-jollily impressive on paper, deviantly (and crucially *accidentally*) eulogising car crashes for excitable kiddies who can't fully comprehend the consequences, yet rather enjoy things that go 'kaboom!' when they smash together.

Being awarded 'Strangest License of 1992' by Electronic Gaming Monthly - you'd *think* - would only have elevated consumer's rubber-necking, car-crash curiosity further. So why isn't it any fun to play?

Why would anyone identify or empathise with a set of mindless, plastic, prosthetic limbs? Even the "speed limit 155 mph" signposts (a nod towards Cannonball Run II?) surely aren't sufficient to wring out half a grin from players once the novelty of assuming the role of an anthropomorphic, decapitated clothes horse has worn off.



I think a big part of Crash Test Dummies' reverse magnetism (*repulsion* sounds a bit strong) is that many of us were never sold on the concept in the first place. I know personally I couldn't have cared any less as a kid when I saw the ads on TV, or the figures in the Argos catalogue. It appears that many others shared my sentiments; it would certainly explain why the proposed cartoon series failed to evolve beyond the water-testing, 22-minute pilot episode you can find on YouTube.



*Mmm. These aren't the Dummies you're looking for.*

Making the legless leap to video games didn't remotely help the Dummy's appeal as far as I'm concerned. At heart, it's all too sensible and irritatingly didactic for its own good. Kids don't like being told what to do when they have no choice. So why would they *pay* for the privilege (via the bank of mum and dad) for the sake of entertainment? Toeing the line is boring, as is Slick and his mentor-rescuing pilgrimage.

Oh alright, I'll read out your disclaimer if you'll just release these handcuffs so I can finally stop playing Crash Test Dummies.

"And remember... Slick and Spin are not flesh and blood; they are Crash Dummies and so feel no pain when they are thrown through the windscreen of a car - even at

speeds as low as 20 miles per hour. Don't be a dummy:  
always buckle your safety belt."

